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ABSTRACT

Conversations with special educators indicates that many view the whole language approach as, at best, a fad and at worst, an assault on what they know about how to effectively teach students with disabilities. In the current atmosphere of increased interest in collaboration between special and general education to better meet the needs of students with handicaps, anxiety over the whole language movement is particularly intense. Calls for increased collaboration come at a time when philosophies of optimal reading instruction between special and general education are in stark conflict. Both direct instruction and the whole language movement can be distilled into images. Whole language proponents imagine a classroom where students are genuinely interested in all they read or have read to them. Teachers are always experimenting, and their freedom is reflected in the dynamic classroom atmosphere. Direct instruction presents an image of students learning in a highly interactive situation, one in which they experience consistent success and are provided immediate feedback when they encounter problems. The role of the teacher is, in part, to demystify the process of reading. Use of approaches based on the work of cognitive psychologists can be integrated into either instructional framework to address some of the nagging concerns raised about each model. Special educators should consider seriously the issues and criticisms raised by whole language authors. If nothing else, empirical research has enabled reading theorists to move beyond statements of philosophy and toward a serious analysis of what teachers really do with children. (Fifty-four references are attached.) (RS)

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Visions and Revisions:
A Perspective on the Whole Language Controversy

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Visions and Revisions:
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In the past several years, the whole language approach towards reading and language arts instruction--sometimes called a literature-based (California State Dept., 1988) or literacy-emphasis approach--has begun to dramatically alter the shape of reading instruction. Hoffman (1989) noted: "The whole-language movement in reading and language arts instruction is so contrary to prevailing norms for schooling that it must be regarded as revolutionary...For some it is a rallying cry for reform. For others it is an illusion of promise that misrepresents what classroom research has demonstrated to be effective..." (p.112).

In conversations with special educators over the past two years--both those in higher education and those in the field--we have found that many view whole language as, at best, a fad, and at worst, an assault on what they know about how to effectively teach students with disabilities. The whole language movement is viewed as an affront not only to the knowledge base of effective teaching (Brophy & Good, 1986), but also to many of the key concepts of special education practice (e.g., direct instruction, teaching to mastery, curriculum-based assessment, and use of explicit reinforcement procedures).

The strong anti-skills bias in whole language, the emphasis on motivation over mastery, the movement's animosity towards sequenced, systematic instruction are all anathema to conventional special education doctrine. The tendency to ask low-achieving students to silently read material that is far too difficult for them in the hope that they will get the gist of the passage seems but one more example of unsound instructional practice.

In the current atmosphere of increased interest in collaboration between special and general education to better meet the needs of students with handicaps, anxiety over the whole language movement is particularly intense. Calls for increased collaboration come at

a time when the philosophies of optimal reading instruction between special and general education are in stark conflict.

After a year of both formal and informal observations of whole language instruction in elementary classrooms and a close look at the emerging literature, we have concluded that special educators should seriously consider the issues and criticisms raised by whole language authors and that much can be learned by observing whole language programs in operation.

The emotional tenor of the whole language debate has curtailed genuine dialogue. The purpose of this paper is to begin this process.

In deference to the whole language tradition, we begin with an allusion from a piece of great literature, a poem by William Butler Yeats. In what some consider to be his greatest poem, Yeats confronted the issue of how individuals learn to write. He did this in the form of a dialogue between two men, much like a turn of the century Siskel and Ebert.

One claimed that "style is found by sedentary toil/And by imitation of great masters" (p. 159), alluding to the fact that good, clear writing always requires great quantities of hard work and that even the most stylistically mature artists often begin their careers by writing in the style of past masters.

His counterpart rather heatedly replies that it takes more than imitation and toil to develop a personal style and write well. He asserts that, in order to write, one must first discover one's true self. "Art is but *a vision* of reality," he states. Formulating the vision is essential.

This assertion is then vigorously attacked by his friend, who argues that great technical skill and facility is necessary for great writing. Without skill, he claims, people are unable to express their thoughts and ideas clearly. Without toil, practice, and systematic feedback, writing style and ability cannot develop.

The two concur that good writing involves a personal vision as well as high levels of technical ability, but they disagree as to how individuals develop the maturity, insight,

and skill as well as the vision. Their debate continues unresolved as night turns into morning.

Though nothing is resolved, the reader leaves with deep insights into what great writing is, and some reasonable, if contradictory, ideas as to how individuals develop this ability. The reader is left knowing that both are right in some regards, although perhaps both overstate their cases. The "answer" lies in the dialogue.

The debate about how to effectively teach reading to students experiencing difficulties, including those classified as learning disabled or "at risk," has continued unresolved for almost a century. There is every reason to believe it will continue throughout our lifetimes. In no way do we hope to resolve the endless debate about reading instruction. Rather, like the Yeats poem, we wish to explore the two positions in order to provide the reader with greater insight into the complex problem of teaching reading to low-performing students.

This essay explores the two seemingly divergent approaches for teaching reading. A major concern is how to implement aspects of each approach so that all students succeed, even those diagnosed as learning disabled or "at risk." We present each as a vision of expert instruction, and analyze what we see as the relative strengths and weaknesses of each "vision." More attention is devoted to whole language, because it is far less well-known to special educators.

Whole Language/Literature-Based Approaches

Whole language proponents (Harste, 1989; Goodman, 1990) vehemently attack the orientation of many remedial and compensatory programs on instruction in discrete comprehension or word attack skills. They decry the overreliance on worksheets in remedial instruction, and the contrived nature of readers that use "controlled vocabulary". Perhaps they decry most strongly the paucity of interesting literature and the lack of enjoyment and excitement in many remedial reading programs for at risk students. They

believe that if reading instruction were more spontaneous, integrated, and authentic, virtually all children would learn to read. Reading ability, then, would evolve in a relatively natural, developmental fashion, much as these children's oral language developed when they were younger (Altwerger, Edelstein & Flores, 1987).

The widespread acceptance of whole language in the past few years can be traced in large part to a dissatisfaction with conventional reading instruction. Duffy's (1983) observations of reading instruction noted that many teachers are almost obsessed with establishing and maintaining routines for "getting through" all the skill sheets and round robin reading activity. He found that discussion of comprehension questions was almost always done in a rush, teachers spent hardly any time explaining concepts, probing students, providing feedback, or clarifying. Duffy (1983) also noted that teachers virtually never stopped to see what students thought about the story, or even to see if they understood it.

Research on the instruction of students placed in "low ability" groups and/or remedial pullout programs presents even more distressing findings. Year after year, these students receive massive amounts of practice in such marginally useful skills as homonyms at the expense of real comprehension instruction (Allington, 1983; Moll & Diaz, 1987). Whole language advocates eliminating ability grouping, so that all students, not just the brightest, receive opportunities to discuss and think about what they read.

A major goal of whole language instruction is to bring a sense of wonder and joy back into reading instruction for at-risk students (Routman, 1988) to eradicate that emotionally flat, routined instruction that Duffy (1983) and Moll and Diaz (1987), observed. Whole language instruction is viewed as a process, not as a particular method, and teachers are encouraged to authentically share experiences with students (Garcia & Pearson, 1989), to "give up control" and celebrate risk-taking (Routman, 1988).

The hope is that students will emulate the risk-taking, the probing, and the sense of experimentation that the teacher provides. Teachers will demonstrate the fact that often

questions have many correct answers. They will utilize real literature, great and small, that deals with complex human issues rarely translatable to the sequences of traditional basal series.

Real books, not simplified, abridged versions, are recommended as the "texts "to be used in the classroom. An example from Routman (1988), a leading whole language proponent, nicely exemplifies the problem with basal readers. She presents two pages from a story--first the original version:

> A long time ago there was an old man.
> His name was Peter, and he lived in an old, old house.
> The bed creaked.
> The floor squeaked.
> Outside, the wind blew the leaves through the trees.
> The leaves fell on the roof. Swish. Swish.
> The tea kettle whistled. Hiss. Hiss.
> "Too noisy," said Peter.

And the adapted version that appears in a current basal reader (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986):

> Peter was an old man
> Who lived in an old, old house.
> There was too much noise in Peter's house.
> The bed made noise.
> The door made noise.
> And the window made noise.
> Peter didn't like all that noise.

Routman concludes,

> beginning readers love reading the original version and read it easily and eagerly. The six lines beginning with "The bed creaked...The floor squeaked..." appear nine times in this short, delightful story. The magic of the language, the rhyme and rhythm, the repetition of the above passage and others throughout the book, and the noisy words themselves (Swish. Swish. and Hiss. Hiss.) make it fun to read and *actually easier* than the basal version.
>
> The original version deals with non-concrete imagery of the sounds of the wind blowing leaves through the trees, leaves falling on the roof, and a whistling tea kettle--rich language which leads children to form mental images of the sounds. By contrast, the story language in the basal reflects only concrete objects and then only to make "noise". The poetic language is gone. The

> child has been deprived of exposure to literary language so necessary for the development of imaginative writing and a love of literature.(p. 22-23)

Routman (1988) illustrates this point with a personal experience as a remedial reading teacher. She had just finished reading the students a beautifully illustrated children's book, which they loved. They wanted to read it; but she refused to let them because it was too hard for them. They insisted, she gave in and, with adequate practice, they were able to read the entire book. She cites how differently the kids responded to reading this book, with its rhymes and large, pretty pictures--as compared to their desultory response to standard remedial reading fare. For the first time, they became interested in reading.

Research on Whole Language and At Risk Students

McCaslin (1989) heralded the whole language movement for indicating "that something is amiss in reading instruction that has no vision of the constructive and predictive capacity of the learner..." (pp. 226-227). Whole language has definitely assisted teachers in developing a more dynamic, richer view of the student--especially the at risk student--as an active learner. This was demonstrated in a recent study by Fisher and Hiebert (1990).

After extensive observations of 40 days of instruction in classrooms implementing whole language programs in both grades 2 and 6, Fisher and Hiebert (1990) found many positive aspects. Students spent more time on literacy and writing tasks than students in more traditional programs. They noted that the literacy assignments and projects were more cognitively demanding than those in the classes taught with conventional programs, and that students did, in fact, have much more say in the type of reading or writing activity in which they were involved. All these would seem to contribute to enhanced growth in literacy and/or improved attitudes towards reading and writing.

Their research also raised several specific concerns. First, they found that virtually all the material read was narrative. They saw the lack of any exposure to expository material as posing a serious threat to students' intellectual growth, especially in sixth grade.

Fisher and Hiebert also noted a paucity of small group teacher-led instruction in the whole language classroom, despite the fact that the whole language approach recommends the use of informal small groups when needed. Most of the time was spent in either whole-class instruction or individual seatwork, with occasional use of cooperative groups. They remind us that it is *long-term* ability grouping, not ability grouping per se, that has been viewed as detrimental to students' self-esteem. They concluded that "teacher-led small groups...are in danger of being a baby thrown out with the bath water" (p. 63).

Whereas Fisher and Hiebert focused on all students in the class, Lindsey's (1990) observational research focused on students with learning disabilities and those being considered for referral and/or grade retention. She noted that, when given the option of either generating a story or copying the one generated by the teacher and the class, the at-risk students invariably copied. Thus students spent a good deal of time each day performing a task with little meaning and little potential for cognitive development.

She also noted problems in the practice of allowing students to select books for extended periods of silent reading. Two of the three targeted low-achieving students consistently picked books that were too difficult for them, and had little success reading them.

Finally, Lindsey noted that most teacher-student interactions were brief and infrequent, rarely more than one minute. Research consistently supports the importance of frequent, informative feedback to students, particularly low-achieving students (Brophy & Good, 1986; Palincsar, 1986).

The practices described in these studies raise concerns regarding the fidelity of the implementation of whole language for at risk students. Was this the intent of the whole

language advocates? Or are educators misinterpreting the intent of whole language instruction?

A recent meta-analysis of research on holistic approaches to reading instruction in the primary grades (both whole language and language experience models) by Stahl & Miller (1989) found that, overall, holistic approaches were *no more effective* than conventional basal reading approaches. This was true on both standardized measures of reading achievement, as well as more naturalistic measures (such as oral reading miscue analyses and attitude measures).

Stahl and Miller did find that holistic approaches seemed to have a positive effect in the area of reading and reading readiness activities in kindergarten. The effects were reversed, however, in first grade.

The authors present some plausible explanations for these findings. They conclude that the emphasis on listening to and writing stories may serve a useful function for at-risk kindergarten students, in that they are able to see the many purposes of reading, and experience the pleasures associated with reading and writing.

On the other hand, the reversal in first grade may be largely due to the limitations of whole language as a *total* reading program. Whereas whole language may do a good job in increasing students' motivation to read, it does not provide systematic instruction in how to read.

Nagging Concerns about Whole Language

While most whole language advocates realize that students need to spend some time on word analysis skills in the early grades (Goodman, 1990; California State Department of Education, 1988), they believe that this instruction should *always* be integrated with the literature being read and never taught in isolation. The following excerpt from a whole language manual gives readers a sense of this approach:

> "...The teacher reads the story aloud and points to the words. Next, the group reads the story through several times in unison,

> *although some students may join in only on repetitive refrains...* As children repeatedly hear the words and see the print, they make associations between letters and sounds; *many children figure out the code by themselves.* Teachers ask students to point to words that begin alike or ones that have similar parts; phonics is taught in context, not in isolation" [emphasis added] (Cullinan, 1987, pp.8-9).

In a critique of the whole language approach, Chall (1989) concluded:

> To say that teachers should teach phonics only as needed is to put a greater burden of responsibility on teachers and children than theory, research, and practice support. *And it puts at even greater risk those children who need the instruction most--low-income, minority, and learning-disabled children.* (p. 532) (emphasis added).

Chall's conclusions parallel observations made by Stahl and Miller (1989) that whole language does not make sense as a *comprehensive* approach for teaching reading to students with potential reading disabilities. There is no *system* for these students to learn how to break the code, and many need this type of systematic instruction as part of their reading program. A recent comprehensive review of all extant research on beginning reading by Adams (1990) concluded that the development of phonemic awareness (i.e. knowing that words consist of patterns of blended letter sounds) is essential for students to become successful readers.

Several recent commentaries provide valuable perspective on whole language. Delpit (1988) observed that holistic/process-oriented approaches towards literacy instruction give many middle class students an opportunity to demonstrate what they have already learned at home, while depriving minority students of the explicit instruction they need. She notes how each culture has many implicit rules, and that the rules of the culture of power need to be explicitly shared with minority students: "...in some instances adherents of process approaches to writing create situaitons in which students ultimately find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them. Teachers do students no service to suggest, even implicitly, that 'product' is not important. In this country, students will be judged on their product

regardless of the process they utilized to achieve it. And that product, based as it is on the specific codes of a particular culture, is more readily produced when the directives of how to produce it are made explicit" (p. 287)

Reyes' (1991) observational research of both Latino and Hmong students in whole language instructional programs also found that lack of explicitness and clarity impeded students' growth in reading. Because of the large number of minority students receiving special education services, Delpit's and Reyes' concerns about the need for explicit instruction are relevant.

Pearson (1989) raises some issues about authenticity and real world literacy tasks. He concludes, "we should encourage students to read more authentic texts than are found in many basals. ...we should ask students to read and write for real reasons (the kind real people in the real world have) rather than fake reasons we give them in school" (p. 235).

But Pearson cautions that "compared to some real worlds, the simulated world of schools may seem pretty exciting... An *ideal* real world may contain many opportunities for exciting applications of reading and writing, but there are many *real* worlds that possess either drab applications, or even worse, no applications" (p. 238).

Finally, he mentions his fear that "whole language scholars will not tolerate...modeling, error correction, and task sequencing as important components of cognitive apprenticeship models" (p. 23). And yet, research on comprehension consistently shows that teachers' explanations and models--their "public sharing of cognitive secrets" (Paris, Lipson & Wixson, 1983)--are essential in order for low-achieving students to develop comprehension abilities (Pearson and Dole, 1987; Gersten & Carnine, 1986). Thus, from very different vantage points, Chall, Pearson and Delpit conclude that whole language is not a *comprehensive* model for reading instruction.

The Direct Instruction Tradition

Many believe the best approach for teaching reading to students "at risk" for failure involves the strong systematic component of word attack strategy instruction during the

early stages of reading, and comprehensible, systematic instruction throughout. Adherents to this approach believe that unless students are taught to read fluently and accurately, they will be unable to comprehend what they read. This is often called direct instruction (Engelmann & Carnine, 1982; Reith, Polsgrove, & Semmel, 1982). This group, too, decries the quality of conventional basal instruction, largely because it is not systematic enough.

Conventional (basal) instruction is geared to the average student, so that at risk students typically receive inadequate practice before moving on to a new topic. To direct instruction advocates, a wide range of specific, concrete examples are necessary to ensure that students really learn to read fluently. As Idol (1988) comments: "If concepts are presented briefly and are not followed by sufficient practice opportunity, the poor reader is likely to flounder" (p. 10).

Whereas much of the writing on whole language takes on a visionary tone and tends to discuss the world of teaching and learning as it ought to be, writing from the direct instruction tradition tends to be much more down-to-earth, procedural, pragmatic and, some would say, mechanistic. (See, for example, Anderson et al., 1979; Carnine, 1983). That is not to say that direct instruction advocates have not often taken on a religious tone in their advocacy. Because direct instruction is so often perceived as a set of procedures or techniques, it seems important to discuss it, too, as a vision.

The vision of direct instruction is culled from research, theoretical writings, informal discussions with some of the key figures, and a decades' worth of systematic observation (Gersten, Carnine & Williams, 1982; Gersten, Carnine, Zoref & Cronin, 1986). In order to understand the term *direct instruction* and the evolution of the concept, it is necessary to go back to its roots in the Bereiter-Engelmann(1966) preschool and Project Follow Through. Follow Through was implemented in some of the poorest, most disorganized communities in the U.S. Students often entered the program in kindergarten

with limited exposure to reading and language concepts. These were the type of communities where large numbers of children were likely to fail in school.

The major operating principle behind the early work on direct instruction in Follow Through was that if disadvantaged students experienced *unremitting success* in all their academic work, very different things would happen. According to the philosophy, if students experienced success each day at a high rate (85-95 percent) and received clear feedback the few times they make errors, their self-confidence, attitudes towards reading, and reading ability would increase. Then, learning to read would be viewed in a positive light.

This could not be done with conventional textbooks, so new curricula were developed. In fact, the direct instruction model can be looked upon as an attempt to radically reform the defects in conventional reading instruction--an attempt to increase the amount of learning that goes on.

The key underpinning of this approach is that at risk students learn to read when they receive instruction that is clear, when they are given many opportunities to participate, and when they are provided with clear feedback. Curriculum analysis involves what many perceive as mundane decisions (e.g., the best wording for teachers to use in demonstrating a concept, the number of examples necessary for low-performing students to truly master a concept, exactly how errors are corrected). Teacher training stressed high levels of teacher-student interaction, emphasizing the role of the teacher not only as a conveyor of information, but as a provider of feedback and guidance to students.

Stein, Leinhardt and Bickel (1989) sum up the legacy of direct instruction research as follows: "*Mastery does not materialize from brief encounters*, but rather develops with (systematic instruction)..." (p. 164). Their assertion highlights the fundamental difference between the direct instruction and whole language traditions.

The principles of direct instruction were field-tested, revised, and evaluated in 20 low income communities between 1969 and 1977, and found to be effective in raising the

reading performance of thousands of low income students to levels close to their middle class peers (Stebbins et al., 1977; Becker, 1977). The effectiveness of the essentials of the direct instruction approach were corroborated by a host of independent researchers. Stein, Leinhardt and Bickel (1989) noted that the findings are remarkably uniform across settings (mainstreamed classroom, special pullout program) and across grade levels. Both experimental research (Gersten, 1985; Gurney et al., 1990; Grossen & Carnine, 1990; Lloyd et al., 1981) and observational research (Englert, 1984; Christenson, Ysseldyke and Thurlow, 1989; Leinhardt, Zigmond & Cooley, 1981) has shown these principles to be effective for special education students.

It is important to note that advocates of direct instruction do not necessarily stress only phonics during the initial stages of reading instruction, but also include systematic instruction in comprehension as an essential part of direct instruction (Idol, 1988; Carnine & Kinder, 1985). However, work is appreciably less developed in this area than in word attack/oral reading.

Nagging Concerns About Direct Instruction

Many have expressed concerns about the conception of direct instruction and effective teaching described above. Some feel that with direct instruction, the teacher is *always* in control by constantly assessing how well the kids are doing and ensuring that all kids receive adequate feedback. Many feel that this method does not seem democratic or natural, and they wonder how kids who are taught with the direct instruction model will ever learn to function independently (e.g. Peterson, 1979). The amount of drill and practice necessary to teach to mastery is upsetting. Cazden (1983) shared the sentiments of many when she concluded that direct instruction "can only be implemented in an authoritarian, manipulative, bureaucratic system" (p. 33).

There is serious concern about the efficacy of direct instruction as a comprehensive means of helping students read independently and comprehend and analyze what they have read (Heshusius, 1991; Harris & Pressley, 1991). Duffy et al. (1987) and Rosenshine

(1991) call for an expanded view of direct instruction. They note that classic views of direct instruction require a teacher to break each learning activity into a series of small steps. The process of comprehension is often not amenable to this linear approach.

Conclusions

In the midst of a recent debate, Pearson (cited in Rothman, 1989) declared that "*reading is more a religion than a science*" (p. 7). He was right. Advocates of each of the major approaches towards reading instruction take on a zealous tone in their communications. Compromise is rarely possible.

Though slow in its evolution, reading research is gradually becoming more of a science. It is only in the last decade that researchers have begun to explore the relative effectiveness of various strategies for teaching comprehension. To date, little of this research has involved students with disabilities (Harris & Pressley, 1991).

Only recently have researchers begun to observe and analyze the realities of classroom reading instruction, especially as it relates to students with disabilities. As with any field in its infancy, some of the initial findings have been crude or oversimplified. A range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies are necessary to shed further insight into the instructional processes. However, there appear to be some findings across this diffuse data base.

The first is that there clearly are instances where systematic instruction is optimal. This is especially true for students who fail to develop phonemic awareness on their own (Adams, 1990). These students need well-sequenced, clear assistance in how to "break the code." Adams' (1990) comprehensive synthesis of research on beginning reading stressed that the use of *isolated* phonics exercises without the reading and discussion of real stories is counterproductive, and that learning to read must be an interplay between instruction in word analysis and oral reading, and emergent literacy/listening comprehension activities

and reading comprehension activities. Sadly, the type of ideal mix that Adams calls for has never been included in any major basal reading series.

Though there is evidence that systematic instruction in word analysis and oral reading should be an essential component of beginning reading, there is no evidence that these same students need ten solid years of skills-based direct instruction. We delude ourselves in thinking that reading can be broken into discrete skills and objectives, and that well-sequenced activities can always be developed.

Once students can read, they appear to benefit most from an interplay of explicit instruction and less structured, holistic approaches. After extensive observational study of whole language instruction, Fisher and Hiebert (1990) concluded that whole language was optimal once students could read on their own...but probably of little use for students who could not read..." Although further inquiry is needed to explore the extent to which his assertion is true for lower-performing students, there is no question that holistic approaches can appreciably benefit students with disabilities. Clearly, whole language has, in some instances, made reading instruction come alive in schools.

There also appear to be far too many instances of low-achieving students floundering in whole language contexts. Much needs to be learned about the exact balance between explicitness and discovery, between the use of well-sequenced activities and naturally occurring texts. As researchers, we need to more carefully examine which contexts make sense for which sets of instructional strategies. This type of precise research is in its infancy.

McCaslin (1989) articulates a major concern with whole language held by many in the field of special and remedial education. She notes that "whole language advocates seem to equate the lack of instruction in comprehension with the futility of instruction in comprehension. With whole language, students are rarely taught 'how to comprehend.' (Therefore) learning to comprehend essentially becomes discovery learning. Some students, especially those of higher ability, can self-instruct...Other [low-performing]

students who were unable to self-instruct...engage in a variety of coping strategies aimed at pleasing teachers, staying out of trouble or saving face rather than learning what it is to comprehend the written word" (p. 226).

In the past ten years, a variety of approaches for improving comprehension have been developed and researched. They fall under a confusing rubric of categories--cognitive strategy instruction (Harris and Pressley,1991), explicit strategy instruction (Pearson & Dole, 1987), scaffolded instruction (Palincsar, 1986). As Harris and Pressley (1991) noted, strategy instruction "is neither fully constructed...nor completely understood. ...more needs to be known about how to teach strategies so that durable use and transfer is maximized" (p. 401).

Many of these approaches are derived, in part, from the work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky, as well as other cognitive psychologists. The goal is typically to develop abilities and skills that are *emerging* in the students' repertoire but that are as yet immature (Palincsar, 1986). In scaffolded instruction, the teacher often "thinks aloud," explaining to students in a step-by-step fashion how he or she reached a specific conclusion. Gradually the temporary structure, or "scaffold," is removed and students perform independently. Many of these approaches involve the use of cooperative and collaborative learning (e.g., Armbruster, Anderson & Meyer, in press; Palincsar, 1986).

We see no reason why these approaches can not be integrated into whole language instructional frameworks or direct instruction frameworks. The use of these strategies can address some of the nagging concerns raised about each model.

A Final Note

We intentionally began with a poem by Yeats. The poem reached no conclusion, but revealed and illuminated much about the process of writing and creativity. Delpit, McCaslin, Pearson, Fisher, Routman, Adams, Palincsar, Carnine, Harris and Pressley all offer some insights into *certain aspects* of teaching reading to low-performing students. Many years ago, Brown noted that the goal of reading instruction should be the "click of

comprehension," alluding to the somewhat mystical moment we have all experienced at some time, and which is the aim of much of the reading instruction we hope to provide.

Both the direct instruction and the whole-language movement can be distilled into images. Whole-language proponents imagine a classroom where students are genuinely interested in all they read or have read to them. Teachers are always experimenting, and their freedom is reflected in the dynamic class atmosphere. Diverse views are tolerated, rather than the right/wrong emphasis that most associate with school.

Direct instruction presents a very different type of image. Rather than the image of authentic, intuitive instruction, it is an image of students learning in a highly interactive situation, one in which they experience consistent success and are provided with immediate feedback when they encounter problems. The role of the teacher is, in part, to demystify the process of reading--to show the students that there are rules and principles and that, by learning the system, all can read with comprehension.

One of the most prominent empirical researchers, Brophy (1985), concluded that one thing he learned from decades of classroom research is how deceptive labels can be. He noted that, when observing classrooms using approaches based on a complex Vygotskian model of scaffolded instruction, he still observed a good deal of direct instruction. Similarly, in direct instruction classrooms, Brophy observed a lot of time devoted to comprehension and higher-order analytic skills, a good deal of reading of "real" unedited literature, and a good deal of scaffolded instruction. If nothing else, empirical research has enabled us to move beyond statements of philosophy and toward a serious analysis of what teachers really do with children.

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